


Slide 1

PLANNING 101-
Planning in Georgia and the Region
Community Planning Institute
Georgia Department of Community Affairs





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Slide 2

History – The Beginning


- Distinct characteristics of urban planning from remains of ancient cities in the Indus Valley Civilization (in modern day northwestern India and Pakistan) lead archeologists to conclude that they are the earliest examples of deliberately planned and managed cities. The streets of many of these early cities were paved and laid out at right angles in a grid pattern, with a hierarchy of streets from major boulevards to residential alleys. Archaeological evidence suggests that many houses were laid out to protect from noise and enhance residential privacy; many also had their own water wells, probably for both sanitary and ritual purposes. These ancient cities were unique in that they often had drainage systems directly tied to a well planned urban sanitation system.



Slide 3

History – The Beginning

- Many Central American civilizations also planned their cities, including sewage systems and running water.



Slide 4

History – The Beginning

- Traditionally, the Greek philosopher Hippodamus (5th century BC) is regarded as the first town planner and 'inventor' of the orthogonal urban layout. Aristotle called him 'the father of city planning', and until well into the 20th century, he was indeed regarded as such.
 - The Hippodamian plan called for a neatly arranged, ordered, organized city, of lined up wide streets. Public space was to be clustered together in the center of the city. Shrines, theaters, government buildings, market space, and the agora (a central space where athletic, political, artistic, and spiritual activity took place) were all to be close together in the center of the city, enclosed by the grid of city streets. Sites for public space were allotted in advance, whereas prior to the Hippodamian plan, site allotment seemed to be done at random.
- What remained of the city, after the placement of sites dedicated to public life and sacred space, was to be used for housing. Hippodamus is credited with creating this division of public, sacred, and private land and it is the earliest example of the practice we now know as zoning.
- Aristotle's ridicule of Hippodamus, which appears in his Politics 2.8, is perhaps the first known example of a criticism of urban planning.

Slide 5

Hippodamian Grid



Slide 6

History - Georgia

Savannah

- Founded in 1733
 - Oldest City in Georgia
 - James Edward Oglethorpe
 - Example of 18th Century town planning
- Savannah City Plan of 1734- Pattern of connected neighborhoods, squares and streets



Source: New Georgia Encyclopedia - <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org>

Slide 7




History

"Fall Line" Cities

- Augusta
- Macon
- Milledgeville
- Columbus

Atlanta

- Terminus and the railroads
- Civil War and reconstruction
- Cotton States Exposition (1895)



Slide 8



Slide 9

History

Two Georgias

- Agricultural origins
- Urban cities
 - Growth was sudden and later than other states and regions
 - Pattern of suburban sprawl

Home Rule State

- Strong private property rights perspective and law



Slide 10

History

1989 Georgia Planning Act

(O.C.G.A. 45-12-200, et seq., and 50-8-1, et seq.)

Legal foundation for community and regional planning in Georgia

"Coordinated and comprehensive planning by all levels of government within the State of Georgia is of vital importance to the state and its citizens. The state has an essential public interest in promoting, developing, sustaining and assisting coordinated and comprehensive planning by all levels of government. This article is intended to provide for the coordination of planning, at the direction of the Governor, by departments, agencies, commissions, and other institutions of the state, and this article shall be liberally construed to achieve that end."

Slide 11

History

1989 Georgia Planning Act

(O.C.G.A. 45-12-200, et seq., and 50-8-1, et seq.)

- Followed upon similar legislation in Florida
- Required local, comprehensive planning under rules managed by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)
- Intended as a "bottom up" planning approach (local to regional to state)
- Plans must be updated every 10 years

Slide 12

History

Zoning Procedures Law

(O.C.G.A. §§ 36-66-1 through 36-66-6)

- Establishes minimum procedures for zoning decisions in the State of Georgia
- Defines and outlines the following:
 - Adoption of zoning ordinance
 - Rezoning of property
 - Zoning hearing procedures
 - Zoning proposal review procedures

Slide 13

Community Planning

“A process that seeks to engage all members of the community to create a more prosperous, convenient, equitable, healthy, and attractive places for present and future generations”

Association -American Planning

One of the fundamental responsibilities of local government is planning for land use and the future growth and development of the community.

Slide 14

Why Plan?

Effective planning ensures that future development will occur where, when, and how the community and local governments want. Planning should:

- Help to preserve and improve quality of life
- Give a vision, clearly stated and shared, that describes the desired future of the community
- Protect private property rights
- Strategically address and support community needs such as economic development, land use, and the environment through collective action
- Coordinate local, regional, and state decision-making and allocation of resources

Slide 15

The Plan Belongs to the Community

- Planning is all about balance among competing interests and almost always involves difficult trade-offs.
- The challenge is to capture in words, maps, and illustrations the future envisioned by the community's citizens, as well as make those difficult trade-offs along the way.
- Every day citizens as well as elected and appointed officials and the development community must be a part of the process to create the plan.

Slide 16

Three Questions Guide the Planning Process

- What do you have?
- What do you want?
- How will you get it?

Slide 17

Why Plan?

"He who fails to plan is planning to fail."

-Winston Churchill

Slide 18

Why Plan?

"If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else."

- Yogi Berra

Slide 19

Why Plan?

"Everybody has plan until they get punched in the face."

- Mike Tyson

Slide 20

What happens if we don't Plan? - Sprawl

- Disjointed, sprawling development patterns - sprawl is an *uncontrolled expansion of auto-oriented, low density development* resulting in:
 - Traffic** - an abundance of low-density housing puts a tremendous strain on our roads and highways because most people in these communities drive their own personal vehicle to work due to longer commute distances and lack of public transportation. Goods and services are spread over greater distances requiring transportation. Road costs due to traffic are in the billions of dollars per year in wasted fuel and lost productivity.
 - Cost of Living** - home ownership and maintenance, transportation (fuel and vehicle maintenance), and higher utility costs.
 - Pollution** - more cars = more pollution. The suburban dweller is automobile dependent.
 - Health** - Urban areas are generally pedestrian-friendly and have access to basic amenities within walking distance, unlike our suburbs.
 - Environmental Issues:** Sprawl can also cause certain environmental issues of which you may want to be aware. The increase to storm water run-off and the impact to clean water caused by greater impervious areas like roof tops, patios, driveways and the roadway system. In addition, there may be wildlife that lives on the lands. You will be displacing them, and it can cause a ripple in the environment.

Slide 21

What happens if we don't Plan? Incompatible Land Use

There are two primary purposes for zoning:

- to facilitate planning and land development on a community-wide basis; and
- to reduce disputes between landowners by keeping conflicting land uses separate. By ensuring predictability in land use, zoning helps maintain property values. No zoning of land could mean you can have day care facilities next to a tattoo parlor or luxury apartments next to junk yards. Perhaps an all night convenience stores next to single family residential and schools next to manufacturing plants.

Slide 22

What happens if we don't Plan?

- "Quality of Life" may occur within single developments, but not likely to occur across multiple properties or districts
- Poor provision and utilization of infrastructure (cities chasing development through inefficient means)
- Traffic
- Harm to environmentally sensitive areas and resources
- Inefficient, more costly allocation of resources

Slide 23



Slide 24

Planning's "Alphabet Soup"

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| DCA- | Georgia Department of Community Affairs |
| RC- | Regional Commissions |
| ARC- | Atlanta Regional Commission |
| MNGWPD- | Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning Dist. |
| GRTA- | Georgia Regional Transportation Authority |
| GPA- | Georgia Planning Association |
| APA- | American Planning Association |

Slide 25

Georgia Department of
Community Affairs (DCA)




"Promotes and implements community and economic development, local government assistance, and safe and affordable housing programs."

- DCA oversees local government planning
- Administers local planning requirements
- Provides plan reviews and assistance in coordination with regional commissions
- Oversees Qualified Local Government (QLG) status
- Recently modified state planning regulations (resulting from SB 86 in 2011-12)

Slide 26

Georgia Department of
Community Affairs (DCA)




Minimum standards for Local Comprehensive Planning

- Three required elements
 - Community Goals
 - Needs and Opportunities
 - Community Work Program
- Other potential elements (based on tiers or needs)
 - Capital Improvements
 - Economic Development
 - Land Use
 - Transportation
 - Housing

Slide 27

Georgia Department of
Community Affairs (DCA)



Coordinated Service Delivery Act (HB 489)

- Adopted by General Assembly in 1995
- Each county and its cities must coordinate delivery of public services
- Avoids duplication
- Increases coordination
- Gwinnett County lawsuit, settled in 2012

Slide 28

Regional Commissions (RC)

- Originally Area Planning and Development Commissions (APDCs) in the 1960s
- Became Regional Development Centers (RDCs) in 1989 Georgia Planning Act
- Renamed in 2009 to Regional Commissions as regions were redrawn and reduced from 16 to 12 regions
- Provide local assistance and coordinate regional planning initiatives within their area
- MPO- Metropolitan Planning Organization administers allotted federal transportation funds

Slide 29



Slide 30

Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)




"Regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the 10-county area including Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale counties"

70 cities, 10 counties, 1 region

Guided by ARC Board and ARC Strategic Plan

Slide 31


Atlanta Regional
Commission (ARC)



- Provides regional data and forecasts
- Plan 2040 Regional Plan
- Livable Centers Initiative (LCI)
- Community Choices
- Environmental resource information/Green Communities
- Local government training and resources
- Workforce Solutions
- Lifelong Communities and Aging in Place Programs

Slide 32


Georgia Regional
Transit Authority
(GRTA)



- Created by the Georgia General Assembly in 1999
- Addresses mobility and air quality “as the Governor’s voice for strategic direction in transportation planning for Georgia’s most populous region.”
- 13 county-area for federal Clean Air Act non-attainment: Cherokee, Clayton, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale
- Operates Regional Commuter Transit service
- Manages Development of Regional Impact (DRI) Program
- Bonds and High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes

Slide 33


Metropolitan North Georgia
Water Planning District
(MNGWPD)



- Created by the Georgia General Assembly in 2001
- Establishes policy, creates plans, and promotes intergovernmental coordination of all water issues from a regional perspective
- Includes 15 counties and 92 cities
- Watershed Management Plan
- Stream and stream

Slide 34

Georgia Planning Association (GPA)




Mission Statement

- The purpose of the Chapter shall be to encourage, promote and assist physical, economic, and human resources planning within the State of Georgia and to further the purposes of the American Planning Association, including but not limited to the following:
- To provide for the exchange of ideas and to disseminate information to public officials and others engaged in or interested in planning and community development;
- To foster meetings, conferences, and educational programs relating to planning and development;
- To promote and support research and publications relating to planning and development and other pertinent subjects;
- To develop programs for the examination and continuing education of professional planners;
- To otherwise promote understanding, cooperation, coordination, and support necessary for progressive planning and development throughout the State of Georgia.

Slide 35


Georgia Planning Association (GPA)



- The Georgia Planning Association (GPA) is an official Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA).
- A 1,100-plus member organization of professional planners and planning officials who serve Georgia's communities in many ways, at all levels of government, the private sector and not-for-profit organizations.
- The GPA provides a place where planners can share their expertise and ideas with policymakers and the general public for the benefit of Georgia and its citizens.
- GPA has provided resources and services to planners and communities for more than three decades.
- Georgia is among the more progressive states in the U.S., given its state mandate to develop local and regional comprehensive plans. The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 has served the state well to establish a basis of community planning

Slide 36

American Planning Association (APA)



- APA is an independent, not-for-profit educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in planning, promoting education and citizen empowerment, and providing the tools and support necessary to meet the challenges of growth and change. They are the leaders of a planning movement. APA champions planning excellence that addresses economic, environmental, and equity issues, and provides technical support for our Chapters, Divisions, and members and the communities they serve. The American Planning Association was created in 1978 by the consolidation of two separate planning organizations, but its roots go all the way back to 1909 and the first National Conference on City Planning in Washington, D.C. The association has approximately 40,000 members.

Slide 37

With all these folks involved how do we get anything done?

Let's talk about implementation!

Slide 38

Elected Officials

- State- General Assembly
- County- Board of Commissioners
- City- Mayor and City Council

Slide 39

Elected Officials

Legislative Actions:

- Adoption of Comprehensive Plans
- Adoption of ordinances
- Zoning amendments
- Special permits, uses, and exceptions
- Budgetary authority

Responsibilities:

- Policymaking
- Appoint citizens to planning boards and commissions
- Final line of local planning decision making (except for zoning variances and administrative appeals)

Slide 40

Appointed Boards & Commissions

Planning Commission

- Appointed by elected officials in an advisory role
- Review, hear, and deliberate upon local zoning applications
- Conduct public hearings and makes recommendations
- Review policy (zoning and comprehensive plan) changes
- Advocate for planning, the local comprehensive plan, and consistent decision-making

Slide 41

Appointed Boards & Commissions

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA, BZA, ZRB, Etc.)

- Appointed by elected officials
- Decision-making body for variances and administrative appeals
- Quasi-judicial actions
- Appeals are to Georgia Superior Court

Slide 42

Appointed Boards & Commissions

Design Review Boards (DRB) or Historic Preservation Board

- Typically advisory boards appointed by elected officials
- Usually for a defined geographic area
- Should be provided a clear set of guidelines and standards to follow and administer
- Some may require special qualifications or training (architecture, engineering, historic preservation, etc.)
- Often provide a "certificate of appropriateness" or recommendation for approval or denial to City Council or County Commission

Slide 43

Appointed Boards & Commissions

Community Councils or Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU)

- Somewhat unique terminology to Georgia and the Atlanta region
- Neighborhood or geographic based citizen advisory boards
- Provide an opportunity to review and provide recommendations to boards or commissions
- Mechanism for citizen involvement and grass roots participation

Slide 44

Role of Local Staff

- Administer and enforce the code
- Provide full and accurate information to landowners, developers, boards, and commissions
- Recommendations based on fact
- Administrative Permits

Slide 45

American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP)

- Certified planning professionals
- Must meet education and experience requirements
- Pass a written test and maintain certification through "continuing education credits"
- Are held to a higher professional standard through the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

Slide 46

The Bottom Line

- Plans are a guide, codes are the law
- Staff, Boards and Commissions must be:
 - objective
 - consistent
 - rely upon plans, codes, and the facts
- Work Sessions vs. Hearings
- Plans and Codes are *living, evolving* documents and must adjust to changing conditions
- Implementation and Enforcement are vital

Slide 47

PLANNING 101- Planning in Georgia and the Region

- **Discussion**
- **Questions**

Slide 48

PLANNING 101- A Georgia and Atlanta Region Overview

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